

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4288

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 1532

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, EAID, AO, PFOR, PO

SUBJ: AIRLIFT INCREASE

REF: STATE 240788

1. I RECOMMEND STRONGLY THAT IMPLIMENTATION AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISION TO INCREASE U.S. CONTRIBUTION BE DELAYED UNTIL ADDITIONAL AIRLIFT RESOURCES CAN BE UTILIZED EFFECTIVELY. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR SECRETARY TO INFORM MELO ANTUNES THAT WE STAND READY TO DOUBLE OUR CONTRIBUTION WHEN AND IF IT IS CLEAR THAT SUCH AN INCREASE IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ANGOLAN EVACUATION. IF IT IS DECIDED TO IMPLEMENT DECISION AS OF OCTOBER 14, RECOMMEND THAT EMBASSY LISBON ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE GOP TO UTILIZE EXCESS TAP AIRLIFT CAPACITY TO MOVE REFUGEES OUT OF NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

2. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, LUANDA RESIDENTS ARE RESPONDING SLOWLY TO RADIO BULLETINS ADVISING THEM TO REPORT TO AIRPORT FOR EVACUATION, AND ARRIVAL OF REFUGEES FROM SOUTH COAST FOR AIRLIFT TO PORTUGAL IS UNEVEN. CONSEQUENTLY, FLOW OF REFUGEES TO AIRPORT OVER PAST TWO DAYS HAS BEEN INSUFFICIENT TO FILL AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT. DURING NIGHT OF OCTOBER 9 A SWISSAIR 747
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(UNDER TAP CHARTER) DEPARTED EMPTY AND A TAP 747 WAS CONVERTED

FROM AN EVACUATION FLIGHT INTO A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT. PRESIDENT OF LOCAL COMMITTEE TOLD US LAST NIGHT THAT COMMITTEE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT TAP ASK ALL FOREIGN DONORS TO SUSPEND THEIR OPERATIONS FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEGINNING OCTOBER 13, RESUMING LATER IN WEEK WHEN DEMAND INCREASED. IN MEANTIME COMMITTEE WOULD MAKE MAXIMUM EFFORT TO REORGANIZE ITS OPERATIONS SO THAT ANTICIPATED HEAVY FLOW OF REFUGEES DURING FINAL WEEKS OF THE MONTH COULD BE HANDLED. COMMITTEE DOES NOT HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF AUTHORITY, AND HIGH COMMISSIONER MIGHT WELL OPPOSE SUCH A RECOMMENDATION, BUT FACT THAT COMMITTEE MEMBERS FEEL THAT AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT EXCEED DEMANDS OF THE MOMENT AS WELL AS THEIR OWN PROCESSING CAPABILITY IS TELLING.

3. BY SEPTTEL TODAY WE ARE DESCRIBING MORE COMPLETELY ORGANIZATIONAL AND COORDINATION PROBLEMS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE OVERCOME IF EVACUATION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY TARGET DATE OF OCTOBER 31. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY WILL BE OVERCOME UNTIL AND UNLESS THE GOP ASSUMES MORE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EVACUATION THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE SO FAR AND ASSURES THE AVAILABILITY OF BADLY-NEEDED PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES OTHER THAN AIRCRAFT.

4. I HASTEN TO ADD THAT PRESENT SLOWDOWN COULD BE REVERSED OVERJAK MIGHT. HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE ISSUED BULLETIN OCTOBER 9 STATING THAT EVACUATION WILL DEFINITELY TERMINATE ON OCTOBER 31 AND THAT PERSONS WHO MISS THEIR FLIGHT CALL WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RE-REGISTER FOR EVACUATION. BULLETIN ALSO SAID THAT EVACUEES' EFFECTS THAT ARE AWAITING SURFACE SHIPMENT TO PORTUGAL WILL BE WAREHOUSED UNTIL THEY CAN BE MOVED. IF LUANDA EVACUEES TAKE THE BULLETIN SERIOUSLY THE EFFECTIVE DEMAND FOR AIRLIFT CAPABILITY COULD INCREASE QUICKLY.
KILLORAN

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